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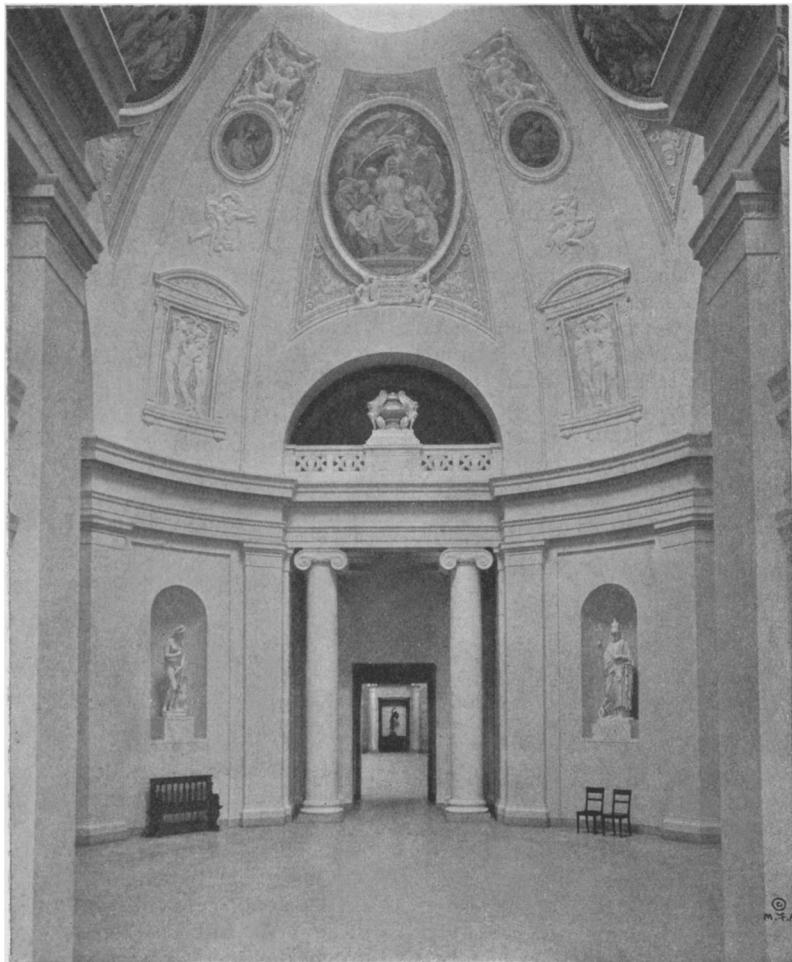
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DECORATIONS OF THE DOME OF THE ROTUNDA
BY MR. JOHN SINGER SARGENT

Unveiled October 20, 1921

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Arion



Achilles and Chiron

Decorations of the Dome of the Rotunda by Mr. John Singer Sargent

THE Rotunda is in plan an ellipse with its major axis in the line of approach from the main staircase. The dome is supported on four piers separated by arches, three of which open into rectangular recesses containing galleries on columns. The surface of the dome is divided into four main sections by ribs, each section containing a large elliptical canvas above the arch. Each rib displays three different subjects, reading from the top (a) a relief of two boys and shield over a painted medallion; (b) an open relief; and (c) a framed bas-relief.

The predominant color of the figures is a golden tone against a blue background. Although the brilliant coloring first attracts the eye and gives welcome gaiety to the austere surroundings of the Museum, yet the great feature of the decoration is the successful use of bas-relief. One feels that here is a painter who is architect and sculptor, too, and that he has composed a symphony of the three arts.

As the visitor mounts the staircase the subject of the large oval before him is Architecture, Painting, and Sculpture protected by Athena from the ravages of Time.

As he turns to the right and follows the ellipse around, the subjects appear in the following order:

MAIN SECTION
OPPOSITE STAIRWAY
Oval Canvas

Architecture, Painting,
and Sculpture protected
by Athena from the
ravages of Time

RIB

- (a) Astronomy
- (b) Arion, the great poet and musician, rescued by a dolphin
- (c) Three Graces

MAIN SECTION
Oval Canvas

Classical and Romantic Art in which appear Apollo, Pan, and Orpheus

RIB

- (a) Prometheus attacked by the vulture sent by Zeus
- (b) Education of Achilles by the centaur Chiron
- (c) Aphrodite and Eros

MAIN SECTION
OVER STAIRWAY
Oval Canvas

Sphinx and Chimaera

RIB

- (a) Ganymede carried off by Zeus in the form of an eagle
- (b) Fame
- (c) Eros and Psyche

MAIN SECTION
Oval Canvas

Apollo and the Muses

RIB

- (a) Music
- (b) Satyr and Maenad
- (c) Dancing figures

It was not until the fall of the year 1916 that plans for the decoration of the Rotunda in the Museum took shape. It was originally intended to have three large lunette paintings, but a study of the problem convinced Mr. Sargent that this was impossible because of the shadows thrown. He then turned his attention to the surfaces of the dome itself, but this involved a very different treatment of the decoration and some semi-structural changes. Finally it was decided to adopt a rib treatment as being of a constructive character. A model to one-eighth of the full size was made and all developments tried upon it, even to the extent of approximating the lighting conditions of the actual Rotunda.

The work, subject to interruptions, has been spread over five years and has been done in three periods. First, the scheme was developed on the model and the building made ready for the application of the reliefs, moulding, and the decoration.



Architecture, Painting and Sculpture



Music



Astronomy



Classical and Romantic Art



Three Graces



Aphrodite and Eros



Apollo and the Muses



Eros and Psyche



Dancing Figures



Sphinx and Chimaera



Prometheus



Ganymede

Second, all the reliefs, mouldings, and enrichments were made and applied. Third, all paintings, the large oval canvases and the medallions were put in place and the finishing touches applied by Mr. Sargent. Thus the work has lasted from the consideration of the plans in the fall of 1916 until its final completion in the middle of October, 1921.

It is of great interest that not only the paintings but all the work of the reliefs and even the mouldings have been done by Mr. Sargent's own hand.

The decorations were unveiled on Monday, October 20, at 3.30 P.M., by the President of the Museum in the presence of a gathering which

filled the Rotunda and its approaches. Special invitations had been issued, and the public had been invited by notices in the press. Mr. Gray made a short address and, upon concluding, gave a signal for the withdrawal of the curtain spanning the Rotunda. The unveiling of a dome proved a unique mechanical problem which was successfully solved by disengaging the drapery fastened across the drum and drawing it upward through the eye of the skylight in the cupola.

Most of those present spent the rest of the afternoon in studying the decorations. During the inspection there was music from an orchestra in the Library Gallery.



Fame



Satyr and Maenad

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Resignation of Mr. FitzRoy Carrington, Curator of the Department of Prints

AT a meeting of the Trustees of the Museum, held on October 20, 1921, the President stated that Mr. Carrington had offered his resignation as Curator of the Department of Prints with the expectation of continuing in private business the wider service to museums which had been one of his official duties.

It was thereupon *Voted*:

"The Trustees accept the resignation of Mr. FitzRoy Carrington with great regret."

"Under Mr. Carrington's recommendations of purchase the intention of the Trustees, at the time of his appointment, to build up the Print Collection so that it might rank with those of the great museums of Europe has been successfully accomplished.

"At the same time Mr. Carrington has taken special precautions for the safety of the prints in the collection, has arranged and catalogued them in a practicable manner, and has been most successful in developing an intelligent interest in them on the part of our public.

"The Trustees desire to place on record their appreciation of the activity, fidelity, and intelligence

with which Mr. Carrington has served the Museum, and wish him all success in his new field."

At the time of Mr. Carrington's appointment, in 1912, the late Francis Bullard was still a moving spirit in plans for the development of the Museum collection of prints. Mr. Bullard's bequest of prints by Turner and other masters greatly enriched the collection, and the Memorial Catalogue which was afterward prepared through the generosity of a friend and under Mr. Carrington's supervision will worthily perpetuate Mr. Bullard's services to the art he loved. Mr. Carrington brought to the Museum *The Print Collector's Quarterly*, a journal founded and edited by himself and cordially accepted by the Museum as a means of developing an intelligent appreciation of prints in America. War conditions prevented the issue of the journal by the Museum beyond 1917, and within the current year it has been transferred to a London publisher and to the editorship of Mr. Campbell Dodgson of the British Museum, Mr. Carrington retaining the American editorship. Mr. Carrington's colleagues, who have had daily occasion to note the expert knowledge, practical skill and ardent devotion which he has displayed as Curator, share in the great regret of the Trustees in view of his resignation. G.